Development Fund; if so, the amount remaining in the Fund in October, 1999?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) to (c) The Government has set up the Sugar Development Fund which, *inter alia,* provides loan to the Sugar factories at concessional rates of interest for undertaking modernisation projects. As on December, 1999, 206 modernisation projects of sugar mills have been sanctioned with loan from the Sugar Development Fund of Rs. 1000.61 crores, out of which Rs. 889.93 crores have been disbursed. As on 31.10.99, an amount of Rs. 983.00 crores was available in the Sugar Development Fund.

Sugar mills owing money to farmers

†173. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH:
SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that sugar mills owe money to sugarcane producing farmers on account of payment for sale of sugarcane;

(b) if so, the total outstanding amount by the end of September, 1999;

(c) whether any action has been taken by Government for an early payment of said money; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) and (b) As on 30.09.99, the cane price arrears payable by the Sugar Mills to the cane growers for sugar season (Oct.—Sept.) 1998-99 were to the tune of

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Rs. 288.65 crores, which further got reduced to Rs. 255.36 crores as on 30.11.99.

(c) and (d) The responsibility for ensuring timely payment of cane prices dues to the farmers by the sugar mills lies with the State Governments, who have necessary powers and field agencies to ensure such payments. The Central Government on its part has been drawing the attention of the State Governments to the provision of the Sugarcane (Control) Order, 1966 including payment of interest in the case of delay beyond 15 days and they are being advised at the highest level from time to time to expedite clearance of cane price arrears. Central Government has also been pursuing a policy of encouraging stability and reasonable level of sugar prices in the domestic market through judicious release of free sale sugar quotas to enable the sugar factories to clear the cane price dues of the farmers.

Revamping the PDS

174. SHRI ABANI ROY:
SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:
SHRI GAYA SINGH:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have been actively considering to revamp restructure the PDS throughout the country;

(b) if so, the details and the objective thereof;

(c) whether the foodgrains distributed under PDS are mostly of inferior quality;

(d) if so, whether Government would ensure procurement of only good quality foodgrains for distribution under PDS; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) and (b) The Government has been